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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 272. MARCH, 1930.

TRUTH — LIBERTY — RELIGION.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"
—I Cor. 3 : 16.

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Editorial.

A Call to Youth.

For the past two years there has been talk of forming an organization of young men and women in connection with our Church and at last a definite step has been taken. The Rev. P. Godding of Banbridge who has been appointed to deal with the matter asks (on another page in this issue) that all young people who are interested should write to him before March 16th. A "Young Person" is defined as one between sixteen and thirty-six. We feel sure that there are many outside these limits who would like to have a serious talk with Mr. Godding. However some sort of theoretical limitation is necessary in a young people's organization and the balance has been fairly held. Mr. Godding asks for two hundred to enrol before proceeding further with the scheme. Now is the opportunity to be among the advance guard in the forward movement of the youth of the Non Subscribing Church of Ireland.

Laymen's League Forward Movement.

Our Laymen's League is nothing if not enterprising. A postal mission is shortly to be added to its faith-propagating activities. Pamphlets dealing with the fundamentals of our faith are to be advertised in the press and posted to all inquirers. Three of our Belfast ministers have consented to assist. The Rev. R. N. Cross, M.A., is to write on "What we think of Christ": the Rev. J. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D., will be responsible for "The Bible, an appreciation" and the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, will deal with "Is the Doctrine of the Trinity Scriptural?" It is hoped to publish these short pamphlets in the next issue of the magazine. Subscriptions to help finance this new venture will be welcomed and should be sent to Mr. R. M. Laird, 8 Cromac Street, Belfast. We congratulate the Belfast Chapter of the Laymen's League on its zeal for our cause and hope that the seed distributed through the post may spring up and bear much fruit.

Bodel-Mackenzie Benevolent Fund.

The sixth annual report of this fund, established for 'the benefit of Spinsters in reduced and poor circumstances and in urgent need of assistance,' has been published and records another twelve months of good and charitable work. We have no hesitation in endorsing the trustee's appeal for "the generous support of our Church." It is high time that some of our congregations looked into this matter. They contribute nothing to the fund and yet have members who benefit from the fund. On the other hand some of our congregations who contribute receive no benefit. Surely it is time that those congregations that are indebted to the fund should take steps to remove this anomaly?

A Welcome.

We gladly welcome the newly-appointed minister of Clough into the fellowship of the Non-Subscribing Church and trust that his new ministry may be a happy and successful one. The Rev. J. Shaw Brown is a very human man and will certainly make many friends among those to whom he ministers and also among his brother ministers. A sermon by Mr. Shaw Brown appears on another page. We offer him an editorial welcome to these columns and feel sure that

a readers' welcome awaits him. We take this opportunity of congratulating the Clough congregation on their choice. What of our Downpatrick congregation? When are we to have an opportunity of offering our congratulations?

Salvation Army.

When the law suit concerning the trusteeship of the Salvation Army funds was pending, we were assured that the heavy costs would not fall on the funds but would be met in other ways. It now transpires that the costs of all parties are to be paid out of the trust funds. We are not :old the total amount of the costs but the figures must run into several thousands of pounds. To say the least of it, it is most unsatisfactory to think of the pennies collected from tens of thousands of poor people, being used to pay lawyers' fees and court costs especially after the giving of an assurance to the contrary. We are not trying to fix responsibility but we are trying to air a grievance. Many poor people who subscribe to the Army funds—and most of the subscribers are poor—must feel dissatisfied that their subscriptions have been put to a use which can hardly be described as "healing the sick and feeding the poor." The sooner the recent litigation with its fulminations and recriminations, is forgotten the better it will be for the Army and its work of Salvation.

The Vatican and Modesty.

The Vatican still lays down its rules and regulations for women's dress and woman still keeps her eyes on the latest fashions from London and Paris. The latest move from Rome is the official encouragement of women's associations "to give counsel and an example of good works and to check abuses committed in the matter of wearing clothing out of keeping with Christian modesty." No doubt there is much to be said for Rome's point of view but one wonders if the attempt to enforce dress reform is not approaching the borders of absurdity. For instance what justification is there for the command that "school teachers must refuse admittance to children immodestly dressed?" We have never yet seen a child immodestly dressed even when it is just stepping into a bath. Modesty is a relative term as witness the case of people in other lands who feel very confused and immodest only when the missionary asks them to put on clothes. There are two kinds of modesty abroad, mock modesty and real modesty, and the first is often mistaken for the second. We respectfully suggest that the Vatican should pay more attention to the heart, soul and mind and less attention to the amount of clothes that should be put on the body. The inside may alter the outside if alteration is desirable, but the outside has not the same power over the inside.

Visit of Mrs. Woodhouse.

Mrs. A. B. Woodhouse, who will be in Belfast during the period March 11th—17th and will address meetings of the Belfast Domestic Mission and the Ulster District Unitarian Women's League, is the first woman to be appointed President of the Manchester Association of Free Churches, an office she now holds.

She is a member of the Council of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, takes a deep interest in the foreign work of the Assembly, and was one of the deputation that visited India in 1928 in connection with the Centenary of the Brahmo Samaj movement.

Mrs. Woodhouse is well-known in Manchester philanthropic circles by her work for many years in connection with the Collyhurst Recreation Society.

As a daughter of the late J. R. Beard, Esq., J.P., one time President of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and Treasurer of the Unitarian College, Manchester, 1886-1914, and as a grand-daughter of the Rev. John Relly Beard, D.D., who was one of the founders and first Principal (1854-1874) of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board, now Unitarian College, Manchester, Mrs. Woodhouse carries on a noble tradition in a noble way.

For long she has been actively associated with the work of the Women's League in the Manchester district and was President of the League in 1926.

Sermon,

By The Rev. James Shaw Brown
(Newly installed minister at Clough).

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them."—Matt. 20.

It is sometimes desirable to go back to first principles in the Christian life, and the beginning of my ministry among you is perhaps the most fitting occasion to do so.

What did Jesus come into the world to do? The answer to that fundamental question should help us to understand our own position as a Church and our relation to other Churches. If I were to ask some people that question I know the kind of answer they would give. They would tell me that Jesus came to establish His Church on earth—they would tell me also that the true Church of Christ must have its priests and sacraments—they would also tell me that its sacraments can only be regularly and properly administered by a priest who has received his Divine power and authority ultimately from the Pope—the head of the Church on earth. It is an ecclesiastical fiction which has deceived many good people. I have no wish to speak disrespectfully of the Church of Rome or indeed any other Church, but it will promote clearness in our inquiry if we try to distinguish between the original simplicity of the Gospel and the ideas of a later age.

The Church Idea.

The idea of the Church in the Romish sense is of a later age long after Jesus was crucified, and long after the first Christian had passed from the earth. If we simply take the Gospel story in answering our question, I am led to the conclusion that Jesus came to start a school rather than a church with its priests and sacraments and creeds. Jesus came to find disciples—pupils—scholars. "Come unto me and learn of me and ye shall find rest to your souls." In the Gospels Jesus appears as a Teacher. He was always seeking scholars, and wherever He found willing listeners He began to teach. He did not wait for a church—He did not wait even for a school in which to begin His ministry of teaching. He knew that wherever two or three were gathered in His name they would themselves form a school or a church of their own. But Jesus Himself was not greatly interested in institutions or organizations as such. He left such practical matters to be arranged and settled by his disciples as time and place and circumstance should determine. And that indeed is what has happened. Hence we have the Jerusalem Church, the Greek Church, the Roman Church, the English Church, the Irish Church, the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church and a multitude of other churches with the Christian name. Time and place and circumstance determined the form these Churches have taken. The Apostle Paul was quick to perceive this principle of liberty in Christianity and when the Apostle Peter and the authorities at Jerusalem wished to impose the Jewish rite of circumcision on the Galatian Church he resisted Peter and the authorities at Jerusalem and maintained the right of the Galatians to order their Church in their own way. But Jesus was not greatly interested in any particular form of Church government.

Jesus the Prophet.

He was not an organizer—he was a prophet. The Protestant mind cannot picture Him in the garb of a priest. He was a teacher—the great Teacher—and wherever He found listeners He began to teach there and then—by the side of the lake, on the hillside, in the house of a friend, in the open street, in the cornfields. It was largely an out-of-church ministry and "the common people heard Him gladly." He took the common things that were happening around him and turned them into parables of the Kingdom. One has only to think of some of these to perceive how unconventional and how human they were. The parable of the Prodigal son, the story of the Good Samaritan, the Publican and the Pharisee, the guest without a wedding garment, the widow's mite. As Jesus went about the world He kept His eyes open to the things that were happening around him and turned these into parables and lessons.

One day He saw children playing in the market place and turned their games into a lesson. Another day He saw a sower sowing in the field and turned this rural work into a parable. The simple test of discipleship in His school was the open receptive mind of a child eager to learn. On another occasion He took a child and set him in the midst and said "Whosoever will not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child he shall in no wise enter therein."

Why a little child ? What is it that child-likeness qualifies for entering the Kingdom ? Surely it is the open mind.

The Childlike Mind.

Why a little child ? What is it in child-likeness that qualifies for entering the Kingdom ? Surely it is the open mind. The child has not made up its mind once for all about difficult theories in philosophy or about the high doctrines of the church. No, the child goes to school with the open mind and teachable spirit and learns and unlearns from day to day. So is it with us of an older growth, we are all learners in the school of life, and the only test the Master of the spiritual life imposes upon its scholars is the open teachable spirit of the child. I remember the saying of an old Quaker to a lady who contemplated adopting a child : " My friend, I know not how far thou wilt succeed in educating her, but I am quite certain the child will educate you." The Quaker was profoundly right, fathers and mothers learn much from their children. Ministers learn much from their congregation. We are all learners in the school of Christ. We sometimes forget that and wish to sit in the Master's chair and rap the desk and cane the other children. We want to be Masters in the school, with the result that it has sometimes led good Christians out of the path of peace into the ways of bitterness and turned those who might have been saints into irritable and self-righteous bigots. It is the mistake which the Church has sometimes made with its excommunications and its anathemas and its persecution of those whom it has been pleased to regard as heretics.

The Church's Mistake.

The Church has too often tried to sit in the Master's chair and dictate what men must believe and what they must not believe, and sooner or later the Church has been put to confusion. The number of sects in Christendom is a historical witness against such futile attempts. Men will not have it. When we deplore the number of sects in Christendom as an evil—and this is an age in which that mood is fashionable—let us remember it is a necessary evil so long as the Church desires to sit in the chair of authority and dictate to men what they must believe and not believe. Men will not have it. Spurgeon said long ago, " Men are so made as to resent nothing more impatiently than to be treated as criminals for opinions they deem true." We in the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church have quite made up our minds—at least in our constitutions, that we shall not be guilty of such an error of judgment We come together as learners—not masters—to learn from each other what is the mind of Christ.

Learners in Christ's School.

Now that simple elementary principle determines my relation to you as minister of this congregation. As the minister of a Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church I do not come to you with the supernatural power or commission of a priest to give you absolution for your sins. Neither do I come as a master with ecclessiastical power or authority over you. " Be not ye called Rabbi," said Jesus to his disciples, " for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ' ye are brethren.' " We are all learners in the school of Christ—you and I together. As a minister of Jesus Christ of fairly long standing I hope that I shall be able to teach you something out of my own experience of the ways and will of God, but I expect and hope that you also will teach me a great deal. And thus we shall grow together in grace and in knowledge of the truth. As the saintly Charles Wesley sang in one of the hymns in our Essex Hall hymnbook :

> Sweetly may we all agree
> Touched with softest sympathy ;
> There is neither bond not free
> Great nor servile, Lord, in Thee :
> Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
> Rendered all distinctions void ;
> Names and sects and parties fall :
> Thou, O God, art all in all !

Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses ; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings.—*Dr. Johnson.*

N.B.—Editorial Communications should be sent to the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, 19 Wellington Park Avenue, Belfast.

Phone—Malone 378.

Contributions must be in the Editor's hands not later than the 20th of the month.

Lent.

By Ullin.

Tendencies come and go like the tides. A few years ago, among our churches, especially in England, there was a tendency towards more of Church-life. That is shown by the architecture of some of our churches, the provision in some prayer books for confirmation as well as baptism, and the observance of the Christian year. It appears an anomaly that an altar or communion table should be the most conspicuous item in a church where never a communion service has been held or is likely to be, and an utter disregard prevails for the Church festivals, e.g. a sermon on the crucifixion on Christmas day. Frequently the matter is controlled by the minister for the time being. Surely it is a mistake to separate ourselves more than need be, from the other churches and to try to convert people doctrinally, before they become church members, instead of making clear the principle of Non-subscription.

As a matter of fact the majority of people are not concerned, very much, about theology; but, there are those who like the order and discipline of Church life, and who feel that they would like a form of Church worship, which would retain this to some extent, if it could possibly be combined with the utmost liberality of thought, yet would leave them free in matters of belief. They want to realise that the denomination they belong to, is really an integral part of the Christian Church as a whole. Their ideal is the unity of the Church and healing of divisions. A liberal construction can be put upon the heritage which we share with the rest of the Church, and this we can do with the season of Lent.

Lent means Spring, forty-six days from Ash Wednesday has been turned into a somewhat gloomy, penitential season, beginning with the quaint custom derived from the Jews of smearing the brow with ashes, on the forehead. It was unknown in the early Church and began with the forty hours during which the body of Jesus was supposed to have been lying in the tomb. It served good purposes in ages when gluttony was a prevailing vice, much more so than is the case now, for we never hear of anybody, except in a diseased condition eating so excessively; but, the old monk in "Ivanhoe" called for "a yard of beef."

At this early season of the year, it is good to give ourselves to thinking of the spiritual meaning of life, of rising into that newness of life which Easter reminds us of. Self-examination, when not morbid, is a healthy exercise. One great mistake orthodoxy makes is that of urging people to dwell on their sins, at this time; the worst thing anybody can do, as it is only driving the impression deeper, instead of getting rid of it. Certainly mark the error you have made, then turn the mind to the opposite virtue. A distinguished officer went to a psycho-analysist to get his aid, in getting clear of a nervousness that troubled him. The psycho-analysist told him candidly "What you are suffering from is fear!" That was rather surprising to a soldier who had frequently, come through the ordeal of active warfare. A few direct questions revealed to the officer, what he was really hiding from himself, and he admitted that such was the case. The very act of confessing it, put the fear outside of himself. That throws light on the meaning of confession. Compulsory confession as practised by the Roman Church, is immoral because it imposes the will of another on the penitent, but voluntary it is quite right, and may be to a friend or to oneself, or as is sometimes the case, to a minister.

Self-examination when not morbid is a healthy exercise and Psychology would consider it a valuable aid to health and happiness. The practice of the Presence of God, the remembrance that God is with us, is a profitable exercise for this season; the endeavour after purification of heart and mind attunes us to the uprising life that is all round us, in the unfolding of buds on the trees, and of the first flowers of Spring. There rises in ourselves newness of life, fresh courage and hope, to go forward in the year that opens out before us.

Laymen's League.

Lecture on "Old Belfast" with Lantern Slides will be given in Central Hall, Rosemary Street, on Wednesday, 26th March, at 8 o'clock by Mr. James Parkhill, J.P.

A short programme of Irish Music will also be given. Tickets 1/- each to be had at Depository, 35 Rosemary Street, or from members of League.

There will be no meeting of League on Thursday, March 20th.

Random Notes.

By Quiet Observer.

In Historical Gleanings mention is made of the destruction of Downpatrick Church documents some years ago. One wonders how many of our other churches have lost not only documents, but plate or other valuable mementoes. An attempt was made some years ago to arrange a safe depository for such things but it came to naught. The matter should not be lost sight of and Presbyteries, if not the Synod, should arrange for compilation of church records and property.

Some years ago I saw in a house I was visiting several sets of Communion plate, which should not have been removed from a certain orthodox Church, so our body is not the only slack one. Many years ago one of our Ministers visiting the library in a Co. Antrim castle, saw a missing Minute Book of one of our Presbyteries.

Old Plate.

Outside of Belfast, Antrim can claim one of the most interesting collections of plate, and a list may interest readers. Six silver chalices Dublin date letter 1719-20, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches tall, six pewter patens $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches diameter, three pewter patens 15 inches diameter, three pewter flagons 11 inches tall, lid, handle, no beak, three collecting copper spoons with polished wood handles. Larne also has a very fine collection of twenty-three vessels, but I understand no date marks. In connection with Ballycarry the oldest plate (six cups) are dated 1832, but that portion of the congregation which seceded at the time of formation of Remonstrant Synod, took with them the old silver cups and christening basin. These cups bear the Brice arms and motto "Do well, doubt not." The christening basin bears the Edmonstone arms. Dunmurry and Holywood also have valuable sets. It would be interesting and valuable information to know if such old congregations as Dromore, Moira, Glenarm, Greyabbey, Crumlin and Cairncastle, hold any old plate, and has Newry still its ancient Sun Dial and the pulpit from which John Wesley preached.

Can anyone tell what became of Limavady's records and plate? Started in 1696 under Rev. David Wilson, it had several prominent pastors and I think it was closed in 1906 on the death of Rev. Joseph Newell. Then there is Carrickfergus. What became of two pewter patens and one flagon which were there in Rev. Thos. Smyth's time 1891-95? These should have come into the custody of the Presbytery.

"The Bible Christian."

February, 1830, saw the publication of a little magazine in Belfast which for about twenty years disseminated throughout Ulster, many articles and items of interest concerning our Church. "The Bible Christian" was issued mainly to present the Remonstrant side of the Church dispute before the public. Originally it was proposed to have a joint publication so that the sentiments of both parties should be placed side by side to enable its readers to compare respective arguments, but this could not be agreed to. In its introductory remarks it states "we are deeply convinced that nothing has been more injurious to the cause of genuine Christianity, than the veneration attached to human names and human systems. The earliest corruptions of Gospel principles, and the first dawnings of unhallowed divisions in the Church may be distinctly traced to an undue respect for human leaders." On 17th March, 1830, The Irish Unitarian Christian Society was formed in Dublin with Rev. James Martineau as Secretary; this society was succeeded in 1876, by the present Ulster Unitarian Christian Association. In last month's Historical Gleanings mention is made of John Ridge, Antrim, he was admitted to Deacon's orders by the Bishop of Oxford in 1611, Priest in 1612, and appointed Vicar of Antrim by the Bishop of Down and Connor in 1619, at the solicitation of Roger Langford patron of Antrim church. Apparently Ridge later became a Presbyterian and held the living contrary to ecclesiastical canons. He with others were ejected by the Commonwealth owing to their loyalty to Charles I.

Humorous But—?

Rev. W. K. Doherty first minister of Comber Church was of rather small stature, and many stories are told about him. Once preaching out doors, one of his hearers procured a barrel for him to stand on, all went well until the sermon was reached when he announced his text, John xiv: 18-19 and as he said "yet a little while and the world seeth me no more" the head of the barrel gave way and he disappeared from the sight of the majority.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL

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The late Thomas Dunkerley told this story. When a candidate for Blackfriars Church, he discovered that he had come without his sermon, an urgent message was sent to his rooms, and the sermon came, but to his mortification, on opening it, he found it was based on Matthew xi : 3 " Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another." However after service some of the principal members approached him, and one assured him that they would not look for another.

HISTORICAL GLEANINGS "FEBRUARY." ERRATA.

Ballee.—Wm. Smith, 1847 should read 1747.

Ballycarry.—Rev. John Bankhead 1883 should be 1833.

Dromore.—Porend Street, should be Pound Street.

Installation of Rev. J. Shaw Brown at Clough.

On Wednesday, February 5th, the Rev. J. Shaw Brown, late of Cosely, Staffordshire, was installed by the Antrim Presbytery at Clough. The day was beautifully fine, the sun shining brilliantly for several hours to give its blessing and good wishes to the new minister and his new flock. The installation service in the appealingly simple and attractive Non-Subscribing Church at Clough was most impressive. The attendance was extremely satisfactory. In addition to a good turn-out of the Clough congregation there were visitors from other denomonations, including three ministers.

The service was conducted by the Moderator of the Antrim Presbytery (Rev. S. P. Whitehouse). The Rev. R. N. Cross, M.A., preached an appropriate installation sermon in which he exhorted the congregation to keep its eyes lifted up to the hills, the great ideals in the landscape of the mind. The three greatest ideals, the mountains to which the eyes should be constanted lifted, were God, Jesus Christ and the Church with its tradition.

The customary address on Presbyterian Law and Practice was given by the Rev. T. Tilson, M.A. This exposition was well reported in the " Down Recorder." Mr. Tilson made inspiring reference to the work of Dr. Montgomery who took his stand so firmly on the principle of non-subscription. The speaker also referred to the Scottish emigrants who came over to the North of Ireland bringing with them the germ of that stirring cry " Civil and religious liberty all the world over."

The charge to the minister was given by the Rev. Edgar Lockett who also gave the charge to the congregation. Mr. Lockett reminded the congregation that the new minister came, not as an untried man, but as a man with much experience in his calling. The speaker congratulated the congregation on its choice of a minister and also congratulated the new minister on being called to minister to the loyal and patriotic people at Clough. " Be regular in attendance at public worship," exhorted Mr. Lockett, " your minister cannot worship God for you."

The customary questions were asked the candidate and the congregation by the Moderator and were satisfactorily answered after which the Rev. J. Shaw Brown made a short statement of his religious principles. After referring to his early training and the influence of Dr. Hunter, the new minister dealt with his own conversion to Non-Subscription. He affirmed the principle of individual liberty in interpreting the Scriptures and the Christ life. His statement of religious belief could be found in the second clause of the Non-Subscribing Constitution.

The installation prayer, profound in utterance and uplifting in spiritual fervour, was offered by the Rev. John Begg.

Dinner at the Slieve Donard.

After the service many friends journeyed to Newcastle to meet at the Slieve Donard Hotel for dinner. Between fifty and sixty people sat down to dinner at one long table in a spirit of joy and happiness evidently caught from the brilliant sunlight dancing on the sea-waves outside. After dinner came the usual toasts headed by " The King " proposed by the Moderator.

" The Non-Subscribing Church " was proposed by the Rev. T. Tilson in an entertaining speech while the Rev. J. Begg responded in a speech equally interesting.

Proposing " The new minister of Clough " the Rev. R. N. Cross showed that he can be as amusing and entertaining behind an empty plate as he can be instructive and inspiring behind the Bible in the pulpit.

Mr. Shaw Brown suitably responded to this toast expressing the hope that he would enjoy the beauties of Co. Down for many years to come.

"The visitors of other denominations including the ministers" was proposed by the Rev. E. Lockett who gave a warm welcome to the visitors, especially the visiting clergy, and thanked them for their support. The Rev. C. Orr, Presbyterian Church, Clough, responded and reciprocated the kindly sentiments expressed and offered a hearty welcome to the new Clough minister of the Non-Subscribing Church.

Thanks to the Clough congregation for its most generous hospitality were expressed by the Moderator and after Mr. Donnan had replied the gathering ended with the singing of the Doxology.

Thus ended a thoroughly enjoyable and extremely interesting day. We congratulate our friends at Clough on the excellent arrangements made for the visitors. Their kindly welcome and generous hospitality will not be forgotten. They even managed to arrange for a most glorious day, something that is beyond most of us no matter how hospitable we desire to be.

S.P.W.

Ulster District Women's League.

The Annual Meeting will be held in Rosemary Hall, Elmwood Avenue, on Thursday, March 13th, commencing at 3 p.m.

A service will be conducted by Mrs. A. B. Woodhouse of Manchester, past President of the British League of Unitarian and other Liberal Christian Women, and later Mrs. Woodhouse will address the members, probably taking for her subject her recent visit to Palestine.

At 8 p.m. on the same day Mrs. Woodhouse will give a Lantern Lecture in the **Central Hall, Rosemary Street,** on her visit to India in 1928, in connection with the Centenary of the Brahmo Samaj Movement.

The chair will be taken by the Moderator and the support of all church members and friends is desired.

One does not *begin* to fall when the fall becomes sensible.—*Bishop Wilson.*

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Women's League

First Church Branch.

A New Year's party was held on Wednesday 5th February, in the Central Hall, to which members of all the District branches were invited. There was a large attendance including representatives from Comber, Ballycarry, Ballyclare, All Souls, Holywood, Mountpottinger, Larne, Newry, and Stanhope Street. Miss Armstrong, Vice President presided, and after tea, which was thoroughly enjoyed, a programme of music, games and dancing was carried through with great zest. The Misses Newman charmed the audience by their rendering of a duet, in Dutch costume, and two solos by Miss Irvine were highly appreciated. Mrs. R. Newman and Miss Kennedy acted as accompanists. An amusing sketch was contributed by members of the Rosemary Dramatic Club, which created much laughter and reflected great credit on the players. A very pleasant evening was brought to a close by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

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41 Donegall Place,
BELFAST.

— The Unitarian and — Free Christian Laymen's League

BELFAST CHAPTER

meets in the CENTRAL HALL, ROSEMARY STREET, at 8 p.m., Third Thursday of the mouth, October to May, inclusive.

OBJECTS (inter alia).

To encourage laymen to take a more active part in the work of the Churches.

To form a bond of union and closer co-operation between the members of the various congregations.

The Committee invite those who are not already members to join. The minimum subscription is 2/6, and further particulars may be obtained from—

MR. J. H. GILLILAND,
35 Rosemary St., Belfast, Hon. Sec.,

MR. J. EDMONDSON, Jr., Asst. Hon Sec.
19 Lime Street, Belfast.

Young People's League.

TO OUR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN.

We hear on every hand that this is the Young People's Age—that the youth of to-day are wide-awake and eager. Active organisations of Young People are springing into life everywhere. There is a very big movement of the kind in Germany. These young people have great ideals. So have we all, for that matter. But we are being almost persuaded that to-day's young men and young women, not only dream dreams, and see visions, but are more eager than ever before in the world's history to make these dreams come true, and to materialise these grand visions.

It is quite true that many (perhaps most) of us older people are not very proud of those four and half years of World War . . . not proud that is to have to admit that such a thing could have occurred after nineteen centuries of Christianity. The youth say that we old people (who were young once ourselves) have made a sorry mess of things. Perhaps it was because we knew no better. Be that as it may, Youth believes it can see possibilities that seemed not to have occurred to us.

However, I must not enlarge on this aspect of the matter just now, or the Editor will draw his blue pencil across the page, and thus end the space he can spare for me, before I have come to my point.

Now this is why I am writing to you—the young men and young women of our Churches.

I want you to band yourselves together, show your strength, organise, and then **do** things. What you will do you will decide later—but just now join up. Some one must start the movement—and as I happen to be one of those people (though old in years, I don't feel old) who believe in you younger ones—I will start it for you. I mean I will help you to start. I want you to use me for a while until you are organised, and then "carry on" among yourselves without me. If you do not understand write to me and I will try to make myself more definitely clear.

But first **join up**. That must be your first move. Give me your names, and addresses **now, at once.** When I get two hundred names I will help you to become aware of each others existence, consider how you can come together. Then you can appoint your own leader, your secretary, or whatever you want . . . .and . . . .and there you are!

I could do a great deal myself. I could draw up a set of rules, or formulate a constitution for you, give you a name, tell you what to do. I could, for example, tell you to form first a little group from (say) five to forty in your own Church; hold a meeting (or two); appoint one or two delegates to attend a meeting say in Belfast. Each group could be asked to bring (through its delegates) ideas for discussion and necessary action, to this representative gathering. And perhaps at this meeting a suggested constitution could be drawn up, sent to the groups for approval or amendment, and finally settled upon as "The Constitution of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland Young People's League." Oh yes! I could do all this, or see that you do it.

But no. I simply want the names of the first two hundred. I shall then arrange to get in touch with you—and somehow get you in touch with each other—and **then let you "carry on" among yourselves.**

It is to be your organisation, and I believe many of you, very many of you, want it. I believe you will know how to arrange some very jolly times together, I believe that in your solidarity you will be of great help to our Church. I believe you will "stir up" us old people (and we do need some stirring up!). This and much else you will be able to do when organised, that you cannot do just now isolated, and unorganised.

Who is going to start, who will be among the first two hundred (or more)? I believe I can persuade the Editor to give us a page next month, when I will tell you what has happened. But you must send me your names, and write to me **before** the **16th March** or I shall be unable to tell you anything more in our April number. Why, perhaps later, you will have a paper of your own. . . . .who knows!

I'll just make one, necessary if temporary rule, (you can alter it yourselves later!) let anyone be called a Young Person who is between the ages of Sixteen and Thirty-Six. Think about it, and don't forget to write me **before** 16th March.

P. GODDING,
The Manse,
Banbridge.

Life—What Is It?

By Rev. Sydney P. Whitehouse.

There is a feeling abroad that science, which has forced nature to reveal so many of her secrets, has some definite information to give us about life. Nothing could be farther from the truth. To the most able of our scientists, life is a profound mystery. Gone for ever is the belief that life could be explained in terms of physics and chemistry.

The same applies to theology or at least the theology that is not divorced from modern knowledge. It has no explanation of life nor does it profess to have one. The old theological explanations of life began to die about seventy years ago when "The Origin of Species" was born. There was not room in the human mind for two such great theories as Special Creation and Evolution. Only the fittest could survive.

Consequently when we hand life marked with a query to our most eminent theologian he follows the scientist and hands it back to us marked with the same query.

The materialistic theory of life received its death-blow in the first quarter of the twentieth century and it is now little more than scientific history. No competent biologist today believes that life is merely a manifestation of matter.

So far as we know the inorganic has never produced the organic, the shell has never made the cell, death has never given birth to life, and yet the materialist asks us to believe that this miracle happened on one solitary occasion millions of years ago but has never happened since.

The Materialist's Difficulty.

This is the materialist's difficulty. It is comparatively easy to follow the development of life once it has appeared but it is a different thing altogether to account for the primordial cell. Of course the materialist does not try to account for it. He starts with a lifeless universe and then smuggles life into it when no one is watching. Once he has smuggled life into the world it is comparatively easy to trace the evolutionary stages up to man.

It is now freely admitted by all authorities that a living organism is something much more than the sum total of its chemico-physical properties. A living organism can be resolved into its constituents, but these constituents cannot be remade into the living organism. We can take life to pieces but we cannot put it together again. We know something of how life behaves but we know nothing of what it is. This is the position of modern Biology. While the Physicists march from triumph to triumph, forcing nature to give up one secret after another, the Biologists are faced with a mystery that defies solution.

Biology is still waiting for its Copernicus, its Newton and its Einstein to establish definite laws and propound tentative theories that will fit the available biological facts.

Autonomy of Biology.

So far as definite information is concerned our ignorance on the How, Why, When and Where of Life, is complete. However this much can be said. Biology to-day has freed itself from the domination of physics and chemistry, from the purely speculative theories of traditional theology, from the unwarranted dogmatism of materialism, and has definitely established its right to be regarded as a separate study, not dependent on, and indeed having very little connection with, other sciences and spheres of human inquiry.

No analysis of life, chemical, physical or any other will bring it down to the level of all other things in the universe. Everything in this universe can, on analysis, be brought down to the same dead chemical level,—the stars in the sky and the stones under our feet, the other worlds rushing with incredible speed through space and the grains of sand in our hand,—everything can be brought down to the same dead chemical level, that is everything except Life. Between all these things and this one thing, between the physical universe and life, between chemistry and consciousness, a vast impassable gulf has been fixed and the passage from one to the other has never been made.

Mystery of Life.

Sir Oliver Lodge puts the case very clearly when he says "My difficulty is not how life came out of matter but how life got into matter." Life certainly has got into matter, it is inextricably interwoven with it and even partly dependent on it but that matter is its origin and destiny, is a theory that cannot be entertained for a moment. Every movement of life from the amoeba up to man gives the lie direct to such a mechanistic interpretation. Even the simple phenomenon of growth completely knocks the bottom out of materialism.

It would seem that the thing we call life is a power which, somehow or other has come

into contact with the power we call matter. We may call it, for want of more exact terminology, a spiritual force, refusing to define "spiritual" beyond saying that it is something opposed to the material and the mechanical.

Life is an unseen spiritual power in a seen material environment. With, and in, and by, and through this material environment it struggles to reveal and express itself. It would seem that the great power we call life, in all its multifarious manifestations, is struggling with matter for self-expression.

Perhaps the long process of evolution, the long climb from the primordial cell up to man, is just the story of the struggle which life has been relentlessly waging with matter, in order to achieve self-expression.

Mountpottinger Women's League.

At the monthly meeting held on Monday 3rd February, Mrs. Belshaw, secretary of "The Belfast Branch of the League of Nations, gave a talk on "The Work of the League of Nations." Space will not allow of referring to all the useful activities which our lecturer spoke of. She said how necessary it is for us to obtain all the knowledge we can about other countries, as this would tend to cultivate the Spirit of Brotherhood which is essential for the binding of the world together. The facilities we now enjoy in the way of Travelling, Postal arrangements, Industrial Exhibitions, etc., help to bring the different nations more closely into touch with each other. Discontent must be stamped out, sometimes a very small thing will cause war. January 1930 celebrated the tenth birthday of the League which has many branches of various Social Reforms, some of which are, "International Council to settle disputes of Legal Nature." "International Labour Organisation, for regulating hours of work, and paying of a living wage." "Protection of women and children who are working under unfavourable conditions." "Destroying causes of disease, by better sanitation, etc." "Limiting the production of dangerous drugs," "Raising the standard of school children's health." "Prevention of Child Labour." In reference to this last clause Mrs. Belshaw described the cruel method of making Persian carpets. Children at the tender age of five sit on a narrow plank, without a back, and elevated six feet from the ground the little workers cannot get down until lifted. Needless to say these unfortunate children become dreadfully deformed; they work from four or five o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock at night. Match and silk factories in China have also been responsible for extreme child slavery. From the age of seven, children have worked from sixteen to seventeen hours per day, and under most dangerous conditions. Horrible accidents have occured through unguarded machinery, and scalding of children who attend to the stirring of the silk cocoons during the boiling process of casing off the silk from the cocoon. During the last ten years through the efforts of the League of Nations, conditions have slightly improved. Mrs. Ewbank presided and thanked our Lecturer for her kindness in coming to address us, and said that this work upon which Mrs. Belshaw is engaged entails considerable time and patience, and all this is given freely by Mrs. Belshaw whose aim is to help towards the peace and general betterment of the World. Mrs. Belshaw very kindly offered to give us another lecture with lantern illustrations, when we have the necessary means of illumination. She said that we would find the pictures very interesting. It was the first time she had addressed a Unitarian audience, and it afforded her great pleasure. The men of the congregation were invited to the meeting and it is to be regretted that more of our Church members did not attend. At the present time, the subject is one of vital importance, and we cannot afford to be indifferent. We must realize our responsibilities, the happiness of the future generations depend upon us. We enjoy many freedoms for which our forefathers made tremendous sacrificies.

The Mountpottinger Women's League intend holding a "Jumble Sale" on Friday, 21st March. Anything in the way of clothes, china, furniture, etc., that our friends wish to be relieved of during spring cleaning, will be acceptable. Arrangements can be made for collecting the goods, upon receipt of a postcard to League Secretary, Miss Forrest, 33 Haddington Gardens, Cregagh, Belfast.

Reports.

Downpatrick.—Downpatrick and Hollymount Sunday scholars of the First Presbyterian Church to the number of well over 60 spent a happy time on Saturday evening in the Assembly Hall. After tea, games were

entered into with zest, a balloon dance being a special feature. Material wants were catered for by the Misses Jordan, M. and E. Dickson, Blossom and May Dickson, Mollie Bell, Mrs. J. Newman, Miss A. Chambers, Miss E. Stewart, Miss Aileen Chambers, Mrs. Tom Hutton, Mrs. R. Moffett, Mr. A. Hutton, and many others. At 9-30 adults came on the scene, and 40 couples danced to good music until midnight.—" The Down Recorder," Feb. 1.—30.

Holywood.—A large audience gathered in the Schoolroom on Thursday, January 30th, to hear Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A., lecture on "Scottish Humour." They had a very good time, and Mr. Cross was cordially thanked for his brilliant and witty lecture, on the motion of Miss Praeger, seconded by Mr. W. Patterson. A collection was made in aid of the funds of the local Nursing Society which amounted to £3 7s. 6d.

Mountpottinger.—The annual Sunday School Party and Prize giving took place on Friday, January 24th. There was a good attendance of scholars for the tea which preceded the entertainment. This latter took the form of Music, Recitations, and two short Plays entitled " Masonic Lodge " and " Aunt Belinda's Burglar." The former was presented by the older boys who had been coached by Mr. L. Watters and they entered very fully into the fun of a farce, the more so as the characters were all presumed to be American Negroes. The older girls under the guidance of Miss N. Allen gave the second play which is a humorous piece not unknown to Mountpottinger audiences but none the less acceptable, being well done. Miss N. Martin provided the music and Miss K. Forrest rendered valuable assistance. The books awarded for regular attendance during the year 1929 were presented by Mr. L. Watters who said it recalled days when he himself used to come up for prizes earned for the same good attendance. He impressed upon all the scholars the desirability of giving the fullest possible attendance both morning and afternoon. Proceedings terminated with the usual distribution of gifts by Father Christmas who cleared the giant pillar-box in which these had been posted.

Killinchy.—Three performances of the popular Comedy " Professor Tim " were given by the Players of the Non-Subscribing Church on January 31st, February 1st and 8th. The play was eagerly expected by a arge number of people from near and far. The first representation happened on a very wet and stormy evening, yet it spite of inclement weather the Lecture Hall was quite full. On the following night the Hall was filled to overflowing and many people having tickets could not by any means get near. It was, therefore, decided to produce the play on the following Saturday evening, February 8th. " Professor Tim," a well-known comedy, has been played in the Abbey Theatre Dublin (where it was first produced), in London and Belfast. The actors were all our own young people. The enthusiasm of the general public sealed the high quality of the acting. The characters were represented by Mr. James Osborne, Mr. Frank Osborne and Miss Osborne, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Kelly, Mr. Wm. Banks and Miss May, Mr. Frank Bishop, Miss Russell, Mr. Wm. Stewart and Mr. J. H. Fitchie, the popular Secretary of the Congregation. The histrionic art was well represented by all the players who entered into the spirit of the piece with animation. The chief parts were sustained extremely well throughout the whole play, and the minor characters sustained their parts in a spirited manner thus contributing to the success of a notable venture. Miss Osborne as the farmer's daughter, took the stage as though she was to the manner born. Mr. Frank Osborne as the unassuming, honest and hen-pecked farmer sustained his difficult part with generous forbearance and quaint humour. Mr. James Osborne, as the young horse-dealing and horse-riding squire " about to be auctioned out " sus-

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tained the character of one involved in economic disaster with much acceptance, and, to the end, maintained his resolve to redeem his lost status in the community. Mrs. Hugh Kelly whose stage abilities among us are well-known, played her part as the farmer's wife, with a verisimilitude which could not be denied, determined to hold sky-high the status of her family. Mr. Hugh Kelly sustained an onerous part as "Professor Tim," assuming the character of a returned prodigal throughout the greater part of the play, yet at the end redeeming his professional ability as a geologist and discovering himself as the generous uncle who had returned to Ireland after long years of wandering in the course of a successful career to re-find his old home among his kith and kin in an Irish circle. Mr. W. Banks, as the young squire's groom, fond of attending and rearing fine horses—an industry he regarded as fast dying out—illustrated the noble side of the horse-lover, deeply attached to the young squire in his fallen fortunes, played his part in his usual generous and sprightly fashion. Miss May, as the young squire's servant, played the part of Mol Flanagan and illustrated the intense devotion of humble folk to men whom they admire and reverence. Mr. Frank Bishop fulfilled the part of Parish Councillor and intriguing land-grabber with a verve rather foreign to his genial nature and Miss Russell taking the part of his wife ably seconded his efforts as a lady with some pretensions to gentility. Mr. Wm. Stewart, rising to the occasion, sustained the family traditions, and, though foiled in their pretentions, was in no wise cast down and determined to attain his object on another tack. His part was well sustained throughout. Mr. J. H. Fitchie as an auctioneer was dignified and professional and performed his function with satisfaction to all parties concerned. Mr. Boston and his two friends readily supplied appropriate music between the acts. We are grateful to them for their gratuitious services which were highly appreciated by all three audiences.

Congregations of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

Belfast.—First Church, Rosemary Street, 11-30 and 7, Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.
,, All Souls', Elmwood Avenue, 11-30 and 7, Rev. Sydney P. Whitehouse.
,, Mountpottinger Unitarian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. J. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D.
,, York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A.

Dublin.—Unitarian Church, Stephen's Green, 12 and 7, Rev. E. Savell Hicks, M.A.

Antrim.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. George V. Crook.

Ballee.—Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m., Rev. Joseph H. Bibby.

Ballycarry.—Presbyterian Old Meeting House, 12 noon, and 7 p.m. occasional Sundays. Rev. William G. Marsden.

Ballyclare.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. A. M. Bell, B.A.

Ballyhemlin.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. John Barron.

Ballymoney.—The Remonstrant Meeting House, 12-15 p.m., Rev. Felix Holt, B.A.

Banbridge.—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.

Cairncastle.—Old Meeting House. 12-15 p.m., Rev. Eustace Thompson.

Clough.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 o'clock noon.—Supply.

Comber.—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 (October to April), Rev. J. Glynne Davies.

Cork.—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, and 7 p.m., Rev. W. A. Weatherall.

Crumlin.—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. G. Price-Jones.

Downpatrick.—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m., Supply.

Dromore.—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6 p.m., Rev. Alfred Davison.

Dunmurry.—First Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church, 12 noon, Rev. John A. Kelly.

Glenarm.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B.A.

Greyabbey.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon (6 p.m. November to February), Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.

Holywood.—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. Edgar Lockett.

Killinchy.—Remonstrant Presbyterian Church, 12-15 p.m., and 7 p.m., occasional Sundays, Rev. David J. Williams.

Larne.—Old Presbyterian Church (Unitarian), 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. James Kennedy and Rev. John Begg.

Moira.—First Presbyterian Church, 3-15 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.

Moneyrea.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church 12 o'clock noon.—Rev. J. Dare Davies.

Newry.—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 7 p.m. (October to May), Rev. G. J. Slipper.

Newtownards.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 3-30 p.m., Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.

Rademon.—First Kilmore Remonstrant Church, 12-15 p.m., Rev. John J. Magill, B.A.

Raloo.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. John M'Cleery.

Templepatrick.—Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon. Rev. Alfred Turner.

Warrenpoint.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church.—Services fortnightly, October to May, at 3-30 p.m.—Rev. G. J. Slipper.

Will Ministers and Church Secretaries please advise the Editor of any mistakes in the above details.

Ulster Unitarian Christian Association.

Hon. Secretary—REV. G. J. SLIPPER, 7 TREVOR HILL, NEWRY.

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